

Status of Claims:

Claims considered in this (1st) action are the originally filed claims 1-17; of which, claims 1, 11, and 16 are independent, claims 2-10 depend on claim 1, claims 12-15 depend on claim 11, and claim 17 depends on claim 16.

In this action, independent claims 1, 11 and 16 are rejected under 35USC102(e) as anticipated by Slater et al USP 6,654,796 (hereafter 'Slater'); and the dependent claims are all rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Slater in combination with other references [claims 2-6 and 12 on Slater in view of Howard US 6,584,505; claims 13 and 17 on Slater in view of O'Toole US 6,345,294; claim 15 on Slater in view of Baker US 6,092,204; claim 7 on Slater in view of Howard and Baker; claims 8-10 on Slater in view of Howard and Barrick US 6,625,647; and claim 14 on Slater in view of Howard and Barrick].

Amend the claims as follows:

1(currently amended). A system for providing a domain name lookup and redirection
~~connection services to multiple~~ users of a data communication network; who are
~~subscribed to said service,~~ said system comprising a server located at a unique and
predetermined address in said network, said server comprising:

- 5 first means responsive to an inquiry received from one of said subscribed users,
said inquiry effectively designating plural destinations in said network as potential targets
for redirection of the respective inquiry, ~~communication inquiries from said network users~~
for operating in conformance to a predetermined set of criteria uniquely associated to said
one subscribed user to determine an address in said network uniquely assigned to a single
10 one of said plural destinations; ~~one of a plurality of host entities;~~ each said inquiry
containing a first addressing term uniquely designating the location of said server in said
network, and a second addressing term constituting a name having a non-unique
association to all of said plural destinations; ~~host entities;~~ and

- second means activated by said first means for using said determined address to
15 redirect ~~redirecting each~~ said inquiry to only said single one of said plural destinations, ~~a~~
~~unique one of said host entities.~~

- 2(currently amended). A system according to claim 1 wherein said first and second
means utilize "user profile" information obtained from said one subscribed ~~each network~~
~~user to establish said predetermined set of criteria,~~ ~~sending a said communication inquiry;~~
~~said user profile information effectively establishing a criterion for uniquely selecting one of~~
5 ~~said host entities.~~

3(currently amended). A system according to claim 2 wherein said user profile
information is stored in a computer devices operated by said one subscribed user,
~~respective users.~~

4(currently amended). A system according to claim 3 wherein said user profile information is stored in said computer device in the form of a "cookies" placed in said computer devices by said server.

5(currently amended). A system according to claim 3 wherein said user profile information is stored in said computer device in the form of a plug-in mini-applications placed in said computer devices by said server.

6(currently amended). A system according to claim 2 wherein said profile information is stored by said server in a location remote from the immediate location of said one subscribed the user, sending a respective said inquiry.

7(currently amended). A system according to claim 2 wherein, in the event that information available to said server is insufficient to make a unique determination of a destination host address to which a said respective inquiry should be redirected, said server communicates directly with said one subscribed user the originator of the respective
5 inquiry to indicate a plurality of specific destination host address name options apparently meeting said predetermined the respective inquirer's criteria for connection; said indicated options being presented in a form and enabling said one subscribed user the respective inquirer to select one of said the indicated address name options; enabling said server to redirect said inquiry to a destination associated with the selected option.

8(currently amended). A system according to claim 2 wherein said predetermined set of criteria criterion for at least some of said inquirers is associated with a small predetermined geographic region including said one subscribed user's immediate location, and said inquiry is required to be redirected to a destination within said region, locale in which the
5 respective inquirers are situated.

9(currently amended). A system according to claim 8 wherein said inquirers one

subscribed user may be mobile and said immediate location of said one subscribed user may thereby vary over time. predetermined locale may vary with movements of respective inquirers.

10(currently amended). A system according to claim 8 wherein said one subscribed user is inquirers are stationary and so that said user's immediate location is fixed over time. respective predetermined locales are fixed.

11(currently amended). A method of providing a name-based redirection service to multiple users of a data communication network who are subscribed to said service, said method comprising:

receiving inquiries from said subscribed users at a server providing said service;

5 each said inquiry containing a locator expression including a first term, for initially directing the respective inquiry to said server, and a second term useful for locating containing generic names associated with both said service and destinations in said network remote separate from said server; service; said second term a said generic name being susceptible of association with more than one said remote separate destination;

10 in response to said second term in each said inquiry, selecting a network address uniquely associated with unambiguously determining a single said remote separate destination; and

redirecting the respective inquiry to the respectively selected network address, said request to said determined single separate destination.

12(currently amended). The method according to claim 11 wherein each said step of selecting said uniquely associated network address includes: unambiguously determining said single separate destination includes:

5 referring to subscriber profile information registered in association with the user who originated the respective said inquiry, as a factor in making the respective selection. said subscribed users to make respective said determinations.

13(currently amended). The method according to claim 11 wherein ~~each~~ said step of selecting said uniquely associated network address, when the respective second term is associated with plural such addresses, unambiguously determining said single separate destination, when a said generic name is associated with plural destinations in said network, includes steps of:

- 10 determining remoteness of ~~the each of said plural destinations~~ associated with said addresses, relative to the instantaneous location of the source of the respective inquiry currently being processed; and
- 15 selecting, ~~as the said single destination,~~ the network address of a destination closest to said instantaneous source location.

14(currently amended). The method according to claim 12 wherein at least a portion of said subscriber profile information of a subscriber ~~at least one of said subscribing users whose inquiry is currently being processed~~ is stored in a computer ~~at a location in said network currently being used by the respective subscriber, subscribing users,~~ and wherein

5 said step of determining a said single separate destination for an inquiry currently in the process of being redirected includes:

communicating with said currently used computer location ~~to refer to profile information stored in that computer, thereat.~~

15(currently amended). The method according to claim 11 wherein, when a said second term ~~generic name~~ in an inquiry currently being processed is found to be ~~potentially~~ associated with plural destinations in said network and information currently available to said service is insufficient to form a basis for unambiguously selecting a single one of said

5 destinations as a target for redirection of the respective inquiry, said step of selecting said network address associated with ~~determining said single separate destination~~ includes a step of communicating bidirectionally with the subscriber whose ~~a said user at the originating location of the inquiry is~~ currently being processed to resolve any ambiguities preventing said selection of said single ~~one of said destinations.~~

16(currently amended). For a computer-based service to redirect inquiries through a data communication network, wherein a server providing said service receives inquiries from subscribers to said service and redirects each received inquiry to a single destination in said network, and wherein an inquiry currently undergoing processing is potentially associated with plural destinations in said network, a software-based system for effecting redirection of said inquiry currently undergoing processing; to a single one of said plural destinations; said software-based system including:

means responsive to information contained in said current inquiry to ascertain destinations potentially associated with said inquiry; and

10 means using predetermined selection criteria associated with the subscriber originating said current inquiry, for selecting a single one of said potential destinations, as the target for redirection of the respective inquiry.

17(currently amended). A software-based system in accordance with claim 16 wherein said means using said predetermined selection criteria includes:

means for determining the instantaneous geographic location ~~origin~~ of the subscriber who originated said ~~the respective~~ current inquiry;

5 means for determining relative distances between said potential destinations and said subscriber's location; ~~instantaneous origin;~~ and

means for selecting a single one of said potential destinations that is closest to said subscriber's location as the target for redirection of said current inquiry, ~~instantaneous origin.~~